

Chapter 7: Improving performance in policing

The Government and its partners in the police service and police authorities share the goals expressed in the new Public Service Agreements (PSAs) – to tackle crime and terrorism, improve criminal justice and raise confidence. There is a strong foundation of performance to build on in these areas, but also a clear need to carry on and make further progress. This chapter focuses on how performance will be supported and challenged in the future, with less reliance on top down targets than in the past, a greater role for local people and police authorities, a sharper role for the inspectorate, and a more strategic one for the Home Office. The result will be a system where delivery of the Government's PSAs on crime, terrorism, justice, drugs and alcohol will be secured with more local ownership of change, less micro-management and a system that is more strongly focused on public confidence.

FOUNDATIONS FOR CHANGE

- 7.1 The last ten years have seen a dramatic transformation in the performance culture of the police service. New tools and powers, new ways of partnership working and new evidence of what works, have been applied across the country. These techniques have been underpinned by targets on crime reduction, increasing use of data, analysis and comparison and support and intervention for the local areas that needed it most.
- 7.2 Crime has fallen steadily since 1995, with a further reduction of 18% achieved in the last four years, **exceeding** the target set in the 2004 Spending Review. At the same time the police and partners have also reversed the decline in the number of offences brought to justice and are comfortably exceeding the target set for the criminal justice system to bring 1.25 million offences to justice in 2007/08.

- 7.3 There have been corresponding improvements in customer satisfaction and public confidence but, as we have discussed in earlier chapters, these have been less striking. The BCS shows a rise of 6 percentage points from 47% in 2003/04 to 53% in 2007/8 in the proportion of people who thought that the police in their area did an excellent or good job. There are small but significant improvements in the majority of the indicators of user satisfaction. Figures published for the first time this week show that nationally 45% of people in England and Wales believe that the police and their partners are dealing with the crime/anti-social behaviour issues that matter locally.
- 7.4 Performance management of police forces and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) from the Home Office has been one of the key drivers of performance improvement, building in challenge for forces on the basis of the comparison between their performance and that of others. This has been underpinned by annual published performance assessments which draw attention to performance that is poor or merely fair, as well as that which is good or excellent. This system has been led by the Home Office's Police and Crime Standards Directorate (PCSD) (and its precursor the Police Standards Unit), working closely with HMIC, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). This system has matured over time, with the methods championed at the centre increasingly mirrored at local level in forces. It can and should mature further as other measures in this Green Paper come into effect, including those designed to give the public more information about crime and police activity, and the introduction of direct elections for police authorities.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE – OUTCOMES

- 7.5 The strategic direction for the Government for the coming years is set by the PSAs. The police service have important roles to play in a number of them, reflecting their key role in society, but four of the PSAs are particularly central to the mission of the police service:

- Make communities safer, reducing levels of serious violent crimes and serious acquisitive crimes, increasing confidence in local crime reduction agencies, and reducing reoffending (PSA 23).
- Deliver a more effective, transparent and responsive Criminal Justice System (CJS) for victims and the public, increasing public confidence in the fairness of the system and delivering better standards of service for victims and witnesses (PSA 24).
- Reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs, improving the level of effective treatment for drug users thereby reducing the harm to communities as a result of associated crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, and for the first time extending this to focus on alcohol abuse (PSA 25).
- Reduce the risks to the UK and its interests overseas from international terrorism, stopping attacks, mitigating their impacts and tackling violent extremism (PSA 26).

The construction of these PSAs reflects considerable consultation with frontline partners and represents a substantial change from previous targets. Five points deserve particular attention:

- PSAs which had perverse effects and were seen as encouraging police to focus on “easy wins” – e.g. overall offences brought to justice – have been replaced;
- The PSAs overall put a stronger emphasis on prevention, for example through the inclusion of alcohol-related outcomes for the first time;
- All the PSAs depend on and incentivise partnership-working;
- A new PSA has been introduced to drive progress on counter terrorism; and

- There is more space for focus on more serious and violent crime, and for local priorities, tackling the lower level crime and anti-social behaviour that affect each community differently, where success will be measured through progress in improving overall public confidence.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE – PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 7.6 The Government intends to reshape the performance management system for the police service and its partners to reflect the new challenges of the PSAs, and to move to a more self-improving system in keeping with the Government’s broader approach to public service reform.
- 7.7 First, the **Government wishes to move to a system in which the police service is held to account much more at local level:**
- The **Policing Pledge** and the publication of **local information on crime and police activity** (as set out in more detail in Chapter 1) will mean the public are better informed about what level of service they are receiving;
 - The public will be able to use the better information they have about the quality of services, to hold their local police service to account, by being able to **directly elect representatives onto police authorities;** and
 - The Government will work with partners to **raise the capacity and influence of police authorities** to hold forces meaningfully to account. Research done for the APA and Home Office guidance in 2006 suggested that few authorities could say that they met all the hallmarks of effective practice for authorities in performance management (Home Office and APA, June 2006).
- 7.8 The measures to improve police authorities’ capacity and accountability will include:
- introducing **clear guidance on the capacity police authorities** need to do their job;

- improving **training and skills** development for police authority members,
- **removing barriers** (perceived or actual) to exchange of data from police force to authority;
- giving a lead and mandatory role for the police authority (in co-operation with HMIC) in the **Chief Constable's Performance and Development Review (PDR)** process and requiring Chief Constables to consult their police authority on the PDRs for their senior team;
- providing police authorities with a route to **request inspection from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)** for their force;
- introducing independent **inspection** of police authorities from April 2009, using provisions in the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008; and
- **regulating to address persistent under-performance by a police authority.** We propose that this could include powers to remove a chief executive, or nominate for a specified period extra members to the police authority to help it improve. The Government will ensure that there is clarity on the processes for the application of these powers and the circumstances in which they might be used.

7.9 Second, the Government will reinforce the focus it has put in recent years on reducing crime and improving criminal justice through strong partnership working:

- At **national level** the Home Office will maintain and strengthen its partnership with other Government Departments which are key to tackling crime, notably with the other Criminal Justice Departments, and the Departments of Health, Children Schools and Families, and Communities and Local Government.

- Through partnerships of this kind the Government will continue to drive key national issues such as the fight against violent crime and anti-social behaviour, prevention work with young people, drugs and problems associated with alcohol, and the drive for a CJS which deserves and inspires confidence from the public.
- Building on the work pioneered by PCSD, the Home Office will continue to support **Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)** and Drug & Alcohol Action Teams (DAATS) to build their capacity as delivery bodies and provide them with the tools to deliver on new priorities. The Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) will perform the same role for Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs).
- With its partners, and working through Government Offices, the **Home Office** will provide support to ensure that the targets local partnerships have agreed on crime, alcohol and drugs through the LAA process are met, and that any risk to national delivery of the PSAs is identified and addressed.

7.10 Third, **the Home Office will oversee the shift of the overall system for managing performance of police forces to HMIC, which will be strengthened to perform this task.** This responds to requests from HMIC and the police service, and its goal is to achieve continued performance improvement with greater ownership by the service itself, and no need for micro-management by the Government. As part of this change:

- There will be a strengthened, refocused role for HMIC, as a **fierce advocate and more explicit guarantor of the public interest.**

- HMIC will have a more hard-hitting role in **exposing under-performance of police forces and authorities and ensuring that it is tackled, and will be required to report annually on the state of the police service**, its capacity, the outcomes it is achieving together and with partners, and signal clearly the relative performance and efficiency of forces. HMIC will take the lead in making any qualitative assessment of forces' performance.
 - HMIC will agree both its inspection programme and criteria with Government, ensuring that these reflect national priorities. Inspections will be carried out on a risk-based approach, with the poorest performing forces receiving regular inspections, and those doing well receiving far less frequent visits.
 - In future we will expect forces to respond more swiftly and publicly to inspection reports by **publishing detailed action plans**, approved by HMIC, with progress in implementing changes re-visited by HMIC after a set period of time.
 - HMIC will **develop its skills base** to include a stronger mix of professional skills from outside policing and over time a larger proportion of recruits drawn from non-policing backgrounds to ensure it benefits from a wide knowledge of best practice from across the public and private sectors. In addition, HMIC will be expected to ensure that inspectors will not generally inspect forces in which they have a personal interest.
 - We will consider introducing **“Bank of England”** type arrangements where HMIC could be required to issue a public letter if certain key standards or targets are not met, to explain what has happened and what is being done to set it right.
- 7.11 Fourth, in exchange for the higher demands on police authorities and HMIC having a stronger role on performance, and the police service's commitment to the Policing Pledge, the Home Office will scale back its performance management activities with police forces:
- The **Home Office will refocus its role on strategic issues** – securing national delivery of the PSAs, championing the public's interests, ensuring the functioning of the overall system is satisfactory and transparent to the public and Parliament, horizon scanning, and supporting new problem solving approaches such as recent initiatives like Quest and the Tackling Gangs Action Programme and the new Action Plan for tackling knife crime.
 - As part of these changes, **PCSD** will be phased out in its current form, and relevant teams in the Home Office will be reshaped to reflect its changed role in the new system and the transition required throughout the system.
 - The **NPIA**, consistent with its remit for police improvement, will be expected to provide or commission support for forces in responding to HMIC reports and to adjust its business plans to reflect that. The Home Office will retain the expertise in supporting partnership working.
 - The Home Office will **operate through the Local Area Agreement process and not set targets for partnerships outside of that**. Under the new PSA approach, targets for LCJBs are already being set through negotiation in order to provide them with greater local flexibility to respond to their local priorities.
 - The **Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism** will continue to measure, monitor and manage the performance of the police service on counter-terrorism issues, reflecting the stage of development and national character of the counter-terrorist system.
 - The way the Home Office shares information with police forces (iQuanta) will be reshaped to avoid the impression that the relative benchmarks in it represent **implicit targets**.
 - And with one exception the Home Office will neither set nor maintain top-down numerical targets for individual police forces – a significant gesture of trust and reduction of bureaucracy. OCJR will consult with partners

with a view to replacing the remaining top down targets (on asset recovery, enforcement, and the Prolific Young Offender pledge) with a new strategy for successful delivery of these elements of PSA 24.

- The Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) framework under which comparative assessments of policing performance are published will remain but the Home Office will no longer make graded assessments under this, which have been interpreted by some as de facto targets.
- Furthermore, to ensure that the burden of data collection placed on forces by the centre is minimised, Sir David Normington (Home Office Permanent Secretary) will review the amount of data that is collected from forces with the aim of reducing it by 50%.

VALUE FOR MONEY POLICING

Over the last decade the police service has seen major increases in funding; resulting in a 25% increase in the overall workforce and a 10% increase in the number of police officers. Following a period of considerable investment the police, along with many other public services, will have to ensure that this additional resource is put to use in the most efficient way.

The police service has already secured considerable achievements in ensuring value for money for this additional resource, comfortably meeting the efficiency targets set for the 2004 Spending Review. In the new world of performance management outlined in this chapter it will be important for forces and police authorities to take even greater local ownership of efficiency.

As chapter 2 describes in more detail, the Efficiency and Productivity Strategy for the Police Service 2008-2011 sets out the vision for how those further gains will be made. Agreed with the Home Office, ACPO and APA, it provides the overall framework within which this important work will be taken forward. This work is increasingly central to the way in which the service delivers, and is a key element of the broader issues covered both in this chapter and throughout this Green Paper.

With more emphasis on local accountability, authorities and forces will now no longer be held centrally to individual efficiency and productivity targets. Instead, police authorities will be expected to agree ambitious local targets and to hold their forces to account for delivering sufficient improvements.

HMIC and the Audit Commission will jointly carry out searching inspections of authorities' and forces' capability to secure better value for money. Each year there will be publication of the cashable savings made, certified by the Audit Commission, and open to national and local scrutiny. Nationally we will continue to promote good practice, including through Operation QUEST, workforce modernisation, and the NPIA's new national IT strategy. The Home Office will retain its statutory powers and HMIC and the Audit Commission will advise the Home Secretary on any cases for statutory intervention.

CONFIDENCE

- 7.12 Dropping top down targets for police forces will represent a significant reduction of bureaucracy, and is a policy that will have only one important exception. The exception is the critical issue of overall public confidence which is at the heart of this Green Paper, and of the policing pledge.
- 7.13 The Government intends and expects to see a significant improvement in public confidence over the next three years, reflected in the PSA indicator from the British Crime Survey that asks **whether people think that the police and their partners are dealing with the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter locally**. To drive and track progress, and evaluate where action is making a difference, the Government therefore intends, this autumn, to set demanding targets on this one measure for all police forces. Based on force level baselines available in October 2008, an improvement will be expected in every force area, and the forces with the lowest levels of public confidence will be expected to make greater improvements than the rest.
- 7.14 This national target will be supplemented by confidence data collected by each individual force at local level. This data will be communicated to the public alongside local data on crime and police activity, and value for money information. Forces and partnerships will be supported in meeting the targets by a new drive on confidence from the Home Office, and by ACPO-led work to implement the policing pledge.
- 7.15 Working with criminal justice partners, the police will also play a key role in improving public confidence in justice, as set out in the *Justice for All PSA*. This PSA is being delivered under a new approach which is set up to allow for greater local flexibility and innovation. Under this approach, targets are not being set nationally. Instead, Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) (which include police representatives), in discussion with wider local partnerships, are developing and agreeing local plans to meet local priorities.

- 7.16 These changes represent a significant reshaping of responsibilities for performance management. They respond to demands from the service and the HMIC for them to play more of a role. The Home Office will manage this transition carefully, reflecting its overall responsibility for the integrity of the system and for delivering the PSAs. But it expects other partners to start to rise to their responsibilities rapidly and will support them and hold them to account for doing so. Naturally, the Home Office will retain its statutory powers and ability to intervene, but expects the system to work well so that they have to be exercised rarely if at all.

THE HOME SECRETARY'S STATUTORY POWERS OF INTERVENTION:

The Home Secretary has a number of existing powers – which complement powers held by police authorities – to address performance issues through the removal of chief officers, directions to forces and authorities and through the powers to mandate collaboration or merger. These powers include:

- Requiring a police authority to call upon a Chief Constable (or Metropolitan Police Commissioner or Deputy) to retire or resign.
 - Requiring a police authority to suspend a Chief Constable (or Metropolitan Police Commissioner or Deputy) pending removal if it is considered necessary for the maintenance of public confidence in the force in question.
 - Mandating collaboration or merger.
 - Where a police force or authority is failing to discharge its functions, directing the force or authority to take measures to remedy that failure, including requiring the submission of an action plan to the Home Secretary
- 7.17 In addition (as discussed earlier in this chapter), we will consider introducing further powers to address persistent under-performance (including poor resource management) by a police authority.

CONCLUSION: IMPLEMENTING THESE CHANGES

- 7.18 These are significant and wide ranging changes, which respond directly to the submissions to the Green Paper supplied by ACPO and the APA, as well as to the views of frontline officers and the public given to Sir Ronnie Flanagan and Louise Casey. They will take time and investment from forces, national bodies and the public if they are to be successful.
- 7.19 **The Government will publish further details of plans to implement these changes in the autumn**, including progress towards a Policing and Crime Reduction Bill planned for the next session of Parliament.
- 7.20 The dropping of top-down targets for police forces will be implemented over this summer; the provision of regular local information on crime and policing activity will be nationwide by the end of the year; and discussions are beginning locally on the public's views of the Policing Pledge, which will be introduced by the end of this year.
- 7.21 The Home Office will reshape its capacity to focus on new priorities from the autumn, and will over the same period work with HMIC to strengthen its capacity and role in tandem with the recruitment of a successor to take forward the extraordinary contribution to police reform and public service made by Sir Ronnie Flanagan as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary.
- 7.22 And by 2010, the public will be able to elect the majority of the members of their police authority, completing a very significant set of reforms that will allow each partner in policing to focus on what it does best.

